Ye
. esterday evening reread fifty pages of *La Porte Stroite;* each time I pick up that book again, I do so with an indescribable emotion; but if the dialogues, the letters, and Alissa's journal strike me as excellent-as well turned out as possible —on the other hand the intervening passages are not devoid of preciosity. Could it be said that the subject demanded this? Then I should have taken another subject. I no longer want to choose a subject that does not permit, that does not require, the frankest, the easiest, and the most beautiful style.

Monday, 19 May

Back from Italy since last Wednesday.

Everything I am writing this morning should have been noted earlier, but I didn't have time. This work of simplification, of arrangement, in which my mind engages in spite of myself in regard to everything it takes up — excellent exercise if it leads to the work of art -—is deplorable here where the particular is more important than the essential.

Interrupted again in the very first lines (went with Em. to see the David exhibit and the Bonnard exhibit). This evening my ink is muddy and my pen blunted. Before writing the first word of my sentence I wait until the whole sentence has taken shape in my head; deplorable; rather the incorrect expression. Need of rereading some Stendhal. Dare to write without order.

21

May

First finish my book.[1] Spurn everything that distracts me from it.

Cuverville, 24 June

Finished *Les Caves* yesterday. Doubtless there will still be much to change after I have given it to Copeau to read and in the proofs. Odd book; but I am beginning to be fed up with it. I cannot yet realize that

it is finished and can't stop thinking of it. More than one passage in the first and second books seem to me weak or forced . . . but I think the hardest parts are also the best-turned-out.

Of late I have been able to work only in a very broken-up fashion, constantly leaving my pen for an English book or for my piano.

I have gone back to Chopin's Barcarolle and Bach's *Inventions fot Two Voices.*

Since *The Way of All Flesh,* I have read much Keats, resumed *Mar<*

[1] *Les Caves du Vatican (Lafcadio's Adventures).*